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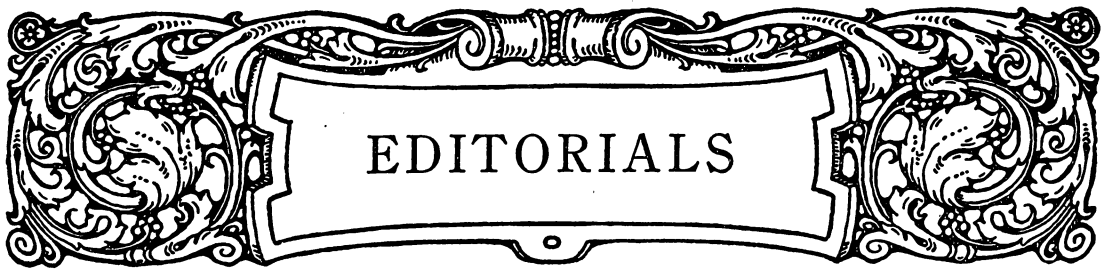
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WHY THE DEFORMATION OF THE FORM IN PUBLIC MONUMENTS IS A SOCIAL MENACE

See page 297

IN the December issue a picture by Cézanne was attacked. This was done not because of its color, since color may be regarded as secondary in importance in any picture, however desirable it may be as an added beauty to a finely composed line—to pattern and faultless drawing and expression. We attacked it because of its brazen *Deformation of the Form*.

Whereupon the Boston *Transcript* of December 18th said: "Such aberrations (as Cézanne's works) are taken altogether too seriously by the majority of critics, who are afraid of being out of the fashion."

Now a fashion is something that is not permanent and is but a passing fad. Therefore we do not mind how much cubistic nonsense and Cézannistic deformation is used in such art-dodgers as are frankly nothing but caricatures or are used in commerce or in the comics of the day. Or when Weber and Fields, dressed up in cubistic clothing, one as a beer barrel and the other as a bean-pole, make us split our sides with fat laughter, why not? so long as it is clean, clever and heaven-blessed nonsense?

But when a cubistic picture or a Cézannistic deformation of form is admitted into the great world exhibitions of the Paris Salon or our Metropolitan Museum and lauded as deserving of as much respectful consideration, even of veneration, as sublime works of art, is it not time to take them more seriously and say, and definitely state why, such examples of the deformation of the forms of nature are a social menace?

If we hope to preserve our democracy and help it along towards a higher perfection and prevent ourselves from sliding backwards towards slavery, we must above all be loyal to the laws of Nature.

"Truth" I cried "though the Heavens crush me in following her. No falsehood, though a celestial lubberland be the price of apostacy!" said Carlyle. "But what truth?" cries the cynical pragmatist.

First of all the truth of material fact, about which there can be no quarrel. Such truths are few, but they are fundamental—witness that twice two makes four, and three and two do not make nine.

Then there are such spiritual truths as are supported by fact and this applies to art in a direct manner:

Whether we believe in the anthropomorphic god of the Jews, the Mohammedans or the Hindoos, or in the Force back of the phenomena of nature preconized by Spencer, Tyndal and Huxley, we are compelled to recognize the operation of a Cosmic Urge or Volition. This Cosmic Urge is ever busy—indicating to us the path we should follow. And, so

long as we follow these indications, we walk in safety toward our ordained goal; when we ignore them, through rebellion or stupidity, we fall into the pit.

Now the supreme indication that Nature gives us is—that she is eternally striving to *perfect the type* of every kind of thing she had created. Solomon sensed this and therefore said: "He has made all things beautiful in His time."

Nature is always beautiful and never wrong—but *only then when her handiwork is perfect*, and she is never right and her handiwork is always ugly when her work is imperfect, be the cause what it may. Who determines that perfection? Nature herself. How? By so fashioning us that only the perfect types of Beauty can move our souls universally.

Now we see types of perfect beauty persistently followed in all art from the days of the Parthenon down. Most of them were established in that apogee of Greek Culture from B. C. 600 to B. C. 400. During that epoch the most rational social structure the world ever saw was organized, and the bodies of both men and women, under those free conditions, reached a perfection of form such as the Creator could applaud.

The Olympian, Isthmian and other games and the philosophy of life based on *mêden agân*—"nothing in excess"—were contributing causes. Hence the Greek artists fixed in marble, terra-cotta and bronze types showing such perfectly beautiful heads, arms, torsos, legs and feet, that Plato affirmed, they were merely copies of perfect types seen by the artists in a previous existence in Heaven. Those types dominated every art epoch down to about 1860, when the "modernistic art party" rebelled against the intuitions of mankind and the fiat of the Creator: "Seek ye the beautiful, even as I seek it!"

And it came to pass that they said: "The search for the beautiful is an antique fad. The artist should not seek beauty, but the expression of character in a personal technique." Thus they became rebels against both nature and the finest instincts implanted in the soul of mankind.

Now we know that there have been throughout history "*streams of tendency*," and that when a snowball begins to roll down hill it becomes larger and larger and more menacing, unless checked. Thus the initial negation of the beautiful grew and grew until it became a "stream of tendency" in the world of art. Finally Rodin the French sculptor sent forth the slogan: "Nature is always beautiful!" thus flying in the face of the fact that Nature, *when imperfect*, is often very ugly and repellent. Not satisfied with this he coined another slogan: "The

deformation of the true in view of the reinforcement of expression" (Camille Mauclair in "La Plume," 1900, page 22). "Rodin knew how to violate the truth" (Léon Rictor in "La Plume," 1900, page 78). "I then set myself the task of finding a method of logical exaggeration" (O. de Kozmutza in Burr McIntosh's Magazine).

What was the effect of this upon Rodin's work? In 1864 he sent to the Paris Salon his "Man with the Broken Nose," in an epoch when men still insisted upon seeking the perfect and beautiful in form and on avoiding the ugly. [See figure 1, page 297.] It was rejected. Why not? In the first place in its technique it looks like a crass imitation of the antique and could easily be mistaken for an antique find; and then it violates the fundamental law that always has governed the world of art: "Flee the ugly!" That the finger-workmanship was extremely clever was admitted.

An examination of the head of Puvis de Chavanne [see figure 2, page 297] shows that as a mere finger-workman, as a mere modeler, Rodin has had some equals but no superiors. No one ever did any modeling with more marvelous finesse than what we see in the forms of the face of that bust, though the slurring of the drapery is childish.

But modeling is not art. It is mere skill—only a part of art. And skilful workmanship of any kind, devoid of beauty of design, thought and spirit is devoid of lasting value. Therefore millions have asked why Rodin did not use his great talent to some real purpose and produce some grand, even sublime works.

While finger-workmanship in skilfully copying a deformed face in a classic technique is art, of course, it is a kind of art that is by mankind felt to be subversive of the fundamental reason for there being any art at all, which, at that epoch, 1864, meant the creating according to Aristotle or the imitating according to Plato of *perfect forms*.

To what extent an artist shall be allowed to depart from nature and deform the perfect forms of the Creator before he becomes a social menace has become a very pertinent question.

Before Rodin, all artists indulged in *modification* of the form. Lessing in his "Laocoon" gives us a fine essay on this matter; but no great artist ever went beyond modest *accentuation* of the form. Even Michelangelo did not *exaggerate*. The first man who dared to *deform* the form was Bandinelli, Michelangelo's rival, in his "Hercules and Cacus" in the Piazza at Florence. But it has worked as a cumulative condemnation of Bandinelli. It was lampooned when unveiled, called a "sack of melons," etc., almost raised a row, and is ridiculed to-day. It is kept in place simply as an historical curiosity and warning.

Rodin was the first modern man to go from *modification* to *accentuation* and from *accentuation* to *exaggeration* and finally end in the morass of *deformation of the form*!

And for what purpose? To produce the beautiful? Evidently not. Then why? No one knows! Bouyer wrote: "It is the affirmation of the contemporary ME." . . . "The romanticism of Stendhal had foreseen this crisis in plastic art which would seek to go 'beyond' the antique, or at least to create life through form in a *totally different manner*."

That is to say, the fundamental motive of Rodin—according to most of the critics who wrote him into celebrity—was not to create the beautiful but to be more expressive than the Greeks—by departing from the forms of nature. It was a profound mistake, as time will prove.

The epoch between 1860 and 1870 was the culmination of the entirely egotistic romantic movement, ending in a feverish ego-mania which bred artists who were only bent on "the affirmation of the me," *my* style, not your style, not everybody's style, not the grand universal style of the Greeks and Italians.

Now, of course, every work of art should have style, which means a *departure from nature*. For, as Goethe truthfully said: "Art is called art, principally because it is not nature." But Shakespeare, the greatest of them all, said: "Hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature." That is—since a mirror never reflects *exactly* that which it does reflect, we should not strive to mechanically copy nature but depart from it; but, as we value our soul, *not to depart too far*, if we wish normal mankind not to punish us by sending our work to oblivion. All art-practice, all art-history, and the instincts of the human soul, even the fiat of heaven is: Do not slavishly follow nature in art, but do not *degrade* it into repellent ugliness by tortuously deforming the beauty of the forms so painfully realized by the Cosmic Urge.

Consciously or unconsciously Rodin violated this command.

Rebuffed at the Salon of 1864 with his ugly "Man with the Broken Nose" he came again in 1877 with his beautiful "Age of Bronze" which will live, though according to report he now calls it "cold." It was received by the Jury, but by one fool jurymen called a "cast from nature"! This served the modernistic party as a pretext for raising a bedlam row and brought Rodin into prominence and the favor of M. Turquet, then Under-Secretary-of-State for Fine Arts, and soon after brought him commissions galore, in the procuring of which he was aided by all the other rebellious artists who clamored for "liberty in art!" Then, no doubt because he felt secure at last after years of poverty and drudgery for others, which may account for his abnormal æsthetic philosophy, he began in reality his practice of the deformation of the form.

First came his ugly statue of "Saint John" [see figure 3, page 297], an almost literal copy of the deformed body of a degenerate type of peasant from Calabria who worked as a model in Paris. On this clumsy body with gnarled and deformed feet Rodin put an ideal head utterly out of harmony with the body and called it, apparently as an afterthought, "Saint John." It was laughed at by the majority of the public and artists, but bought by Turquet for the Luxembourg Museum.

Now, had Rodin confined himself to deforming the form in his ideal sculpture only, no one would have ever done more than laugh at him and he would not now be such an over-advertised man. But he carried his deformation theory into public monumental sculpture also. What was the result? According to his eulogists, in every case where he erected a public monument a fierce civic quarrel resulted, and one wonders how it was possible for him to obtain the commissions he did obtain.

First came his "Claude le Lorrain" erected in 1892. It shows a miserable little shrimp of a man with zigzag legs and a head too big, utterly silly as an interpretation of the genius of the greatest landscape painter the world ever saw. It raised so much opposition that it divided the city of Nancy into opposite parties. "Dissatisfaction spread to the local authorities, who talked of nothing less than displacing the monument" as we get the report from Lawton, one of Rodin's eulogizers. Then came the "Burgesses of Calais," made to express and record the suffering of the eminent citizens when they surrendered to Edward III, a group that utterly defeats itself by the ugly deformation of the forms in every one of the six figures composing that unfortunate monument.

How many men—gone daft with the silly idea that "personal style" is everything in art—have been allured to call this group "strong," when it is only brutal? [See figure 4, page 297.] Note the coarse and over-deformed hands and key; note the enormous feet which are no longer human in their gnarled and bestial deformity; note that the whole man looks more like a cave-man with a Neanderthal skull, instead of a leading citizen of Calais.

The result is that while modest *accentuation* would have aided Rodin's hope of moving men, his excessive over-deformation immediately arouses their questioning wonder and rebellion and his noble purpose—of stirring human emotion—if he had that purpose—is defeated by the brutality which results from forcing the note of a theory of æsthetic philosophy which is wrong.

What took place in Calais when this creation was set up? We are told that the citizens split and quarreled so mightily that civil strife was feared. And to-day there are still many who regard the erection of this work as a calamity, to such an extent does it *divide the people*—instead of uniting it. Instead of peace, joy and glory following the erection of this group, they have had quarrel, anger and shame.

When the "Sarmiento" monument was erected at Buenos Ayres in 1899 the same thing happened. And it was bound to happen. The whole statue of the man, in conception and composition, is so over-exaggerated that it is exasperating, as a portrait, however much it may please those who hunger for extreme stylization of form. It occasioned great rage in the city, divided the people, the majority of whom ridiculed it, but were prevented by force from pulling it down.

Finally he came out with his latest specimen of the "deformation of the form" in his Balzac [see figure 6, page 298]. Max Nordau said in his "Art and Artists" as to this statue:

"Rodin has overstepped, in his Balzac Memorial, which he first exhibited in 1898, the very extensive limits within which his silly aberrations might have been borne. Master Shallow, who tolerates much, could not tolerate this work, and broke down under its crushing exaction. When the public saw this provocative monstrosity it broke out into that uncontrollable laughter whereby the outraged intelligence of mankind revenges itself with primitive force for restraints that it has long suffered in silence. In the face of this result the Committee of the French Union of Authors, which had commissioned the Balzac memorial, resolved unani-

mously to decline it. In vain the Condottieri, who had usurped supremacy in art criticism by the most unscrupulous methods of conspiracy, violence and oppression, made desperate efforts to maintain themselves. They were powerless against the armed rising of sensible people who had at last come to themselves. Their tyranny was vanquished and they were swept away. They might still talk all sorts of twaddle about the stupidity of the masses, and, in impotent rage, hiss at the victors the well-known shibboleths "Philistine," "Provincial," etc.; but this final, faint-hearted nagging sank unheard in the unanimous cry of scorn from public opinion.

"Rodin worked at this wretched piece of work for ten whole years. First he read all Balzac's works; then he made a journey to Touraine and spent months there, so as to absorb the human environment from which Balzac took so many of his models and to become permeated with the feelings and impressions with which Balzac may have satiated himself when composing—all this to make a human figure which was to be the likeness of a man whom many people now living have known in the flesh. After these preliminary studies Rodin finally proceeded to form his Balzac. His head was to be 'a synthesis of his works,' his physiognomy was to be summed up 'in an eye that looks on the *Comédie Humaine*, and in an upper lip that is curled in contempt for humanity.' So said Rodin himself in several interviews which were published at the time when his statue was exhibited. He was then merely repeating what the twaddlers of Montmartre had chattered to him. It would be easy to make jests about this inflammation of the brain, but it is not worth even cheap rallery. It is quite enough to establish, soberly and drily, that Rodin, like a child or an idiot, aimed at something impossible. Sculpture cannot furnish any 'synthesis of Balzac's works.' Nature herself cannot, in the sense that Balzac himself, when he was alive, did not synthesize his works, in his externals, in his physiognomy. He had perhaps the head of a man of mark, but there was assuredly nothing in his face to show that he had written the 'Physiology of Marriage,' and not written 'La Chartreuse de Parme' (Stendhal). Rodin imagined that a portrait-statue could quite alone, merely by its own means, supply the place of a biography and a psychological and literary characterization of the person represented. This patent lunacy was necessarily bound to end, as it has ended, in a mad caricature."

We give an illustration of Balzac himself on page 298, figure 5, and a photograph of the Balzac statue in figure 2. The reader will see that the form has been so deformed that it no longer has any semblance to a human being. It is in fact so monstrous that it is fascinating. It demonstrates the fascination of monstrosities. We doubt if Rodin has ever become conscious of the enormity of his mistake in trying to express the entire *Comédie Humaine* in one statue. Perhaps, since his friend Henri Rochefort said to him that it could not be done, he may be beginning to change his mind.

Thus we see that in every case deformation of the form has brought on a large or small civil strife in every country where a public monument by Rodin has been allowed to be erected.

Now all social division is a social menace. But

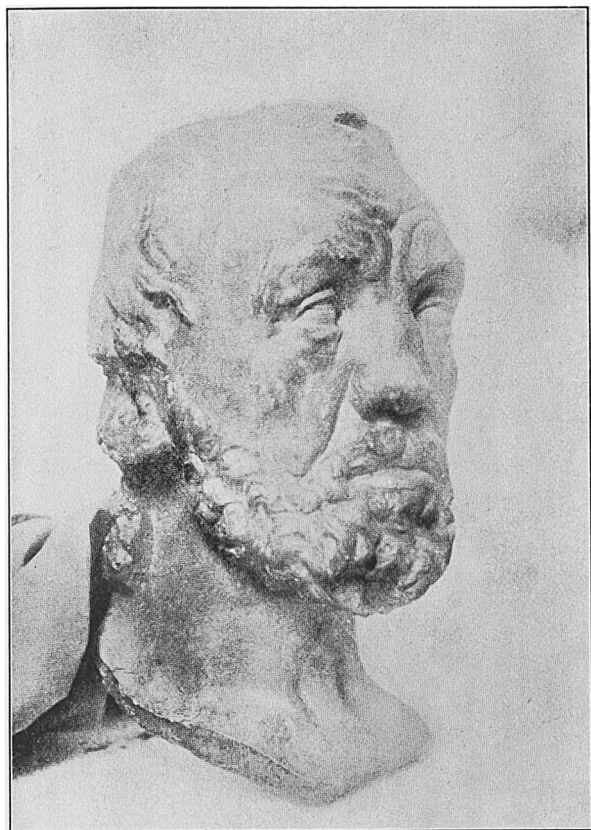


FIG. 1. MAN WITH THE BROKEN NOSE
A Deformed Face

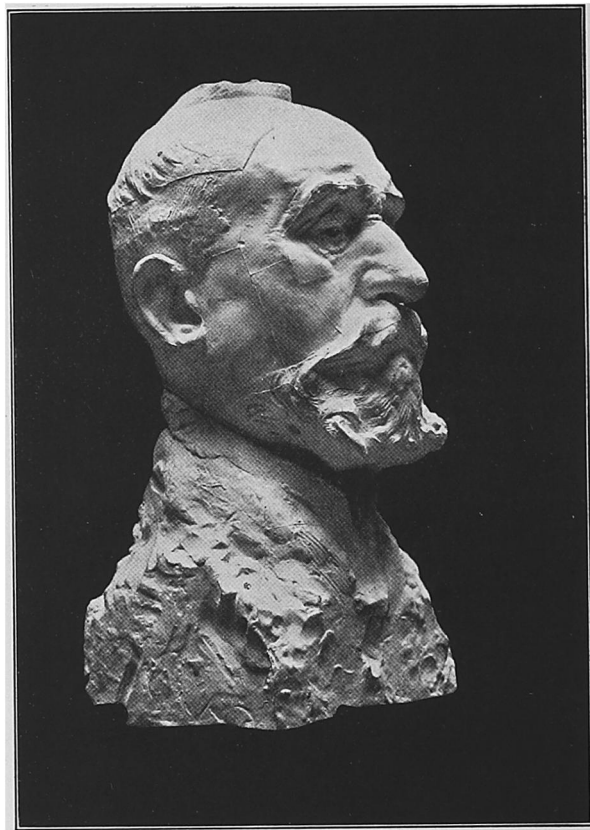


FIG. 2. FINE BUST OF PUVIS DE CHAVANNES
An Example of Skilful Modelling

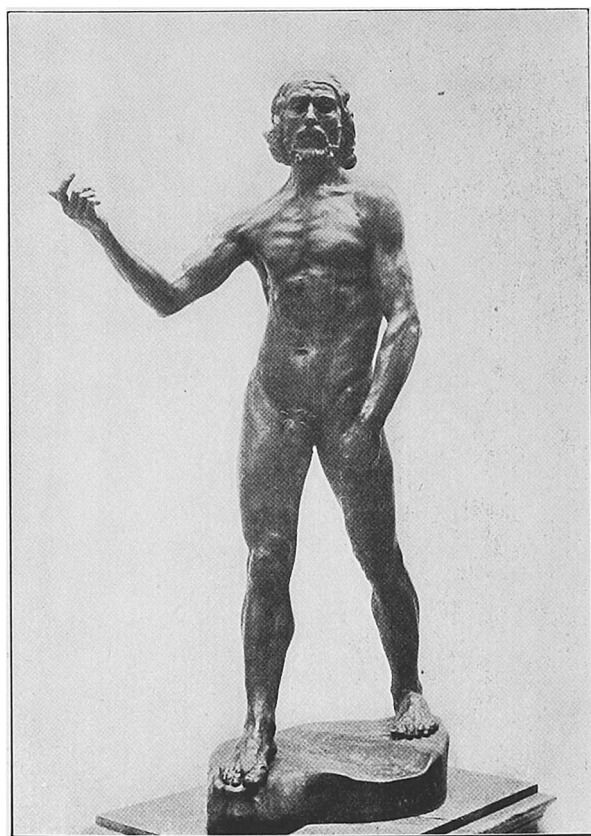


Fig. 3. SAINT JOHN
With a Deformed Body and Feet

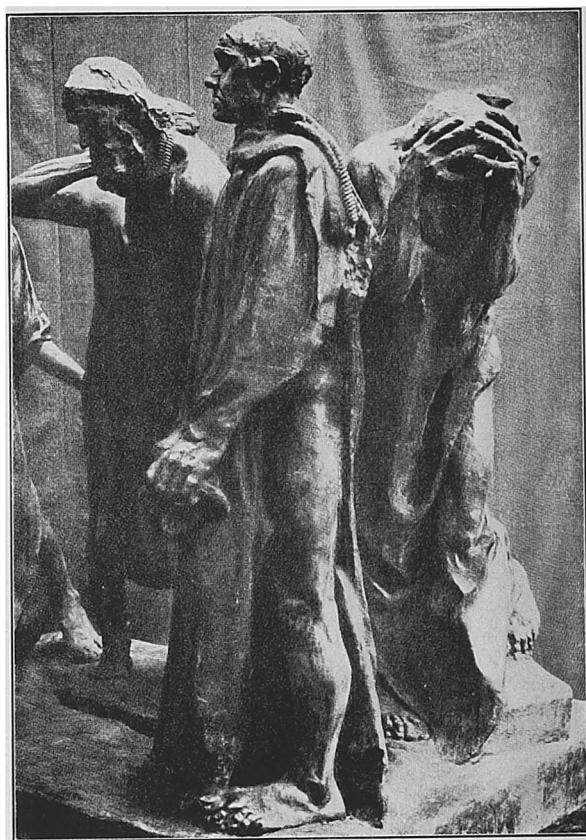


FIG. 4. THE BURGESSES OF CALAIS
Deformed Hands and Feet

EXAMPLES OF DEFORMATION BY RODIN

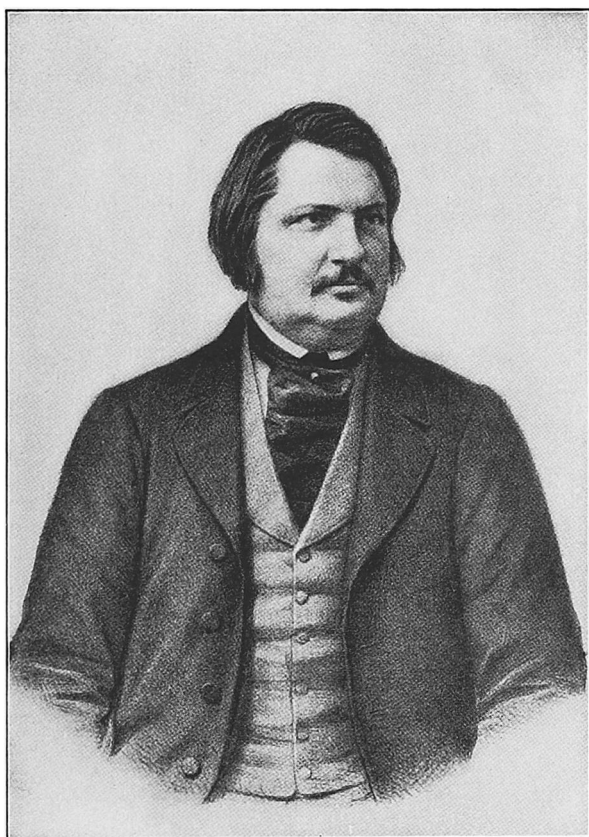


FIG. 5. PORTRAIT OF H. DE BALZAC



FIG. 6. DEFORMED STATUE OF BALZAC BY RODIN

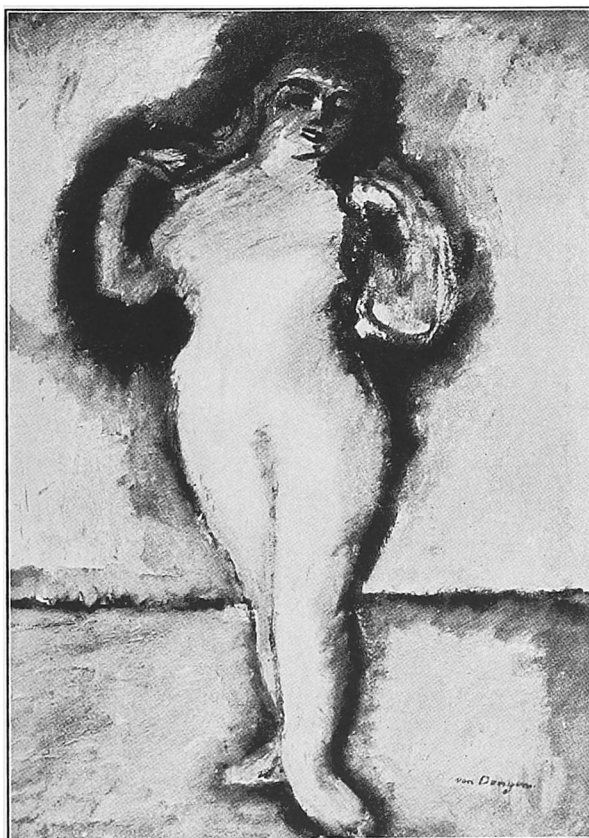


FIG. 7. VENUS BY VAN DONGEN
An Example of Deformation

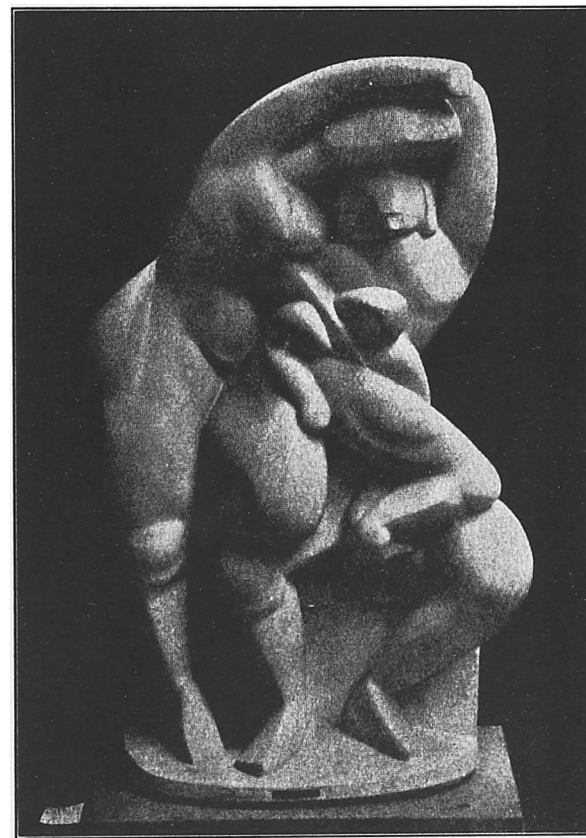


FIG. 8. "FAMILY LIFE" BY ARCHIPENKO
A Specimen of Deformation

THE PROGRESSIVE DEFORMATION OF THE FORM SINCE RODIN BEGAN THE PRACTICE

when this division is on so basic a matter as a public monument, it becomes a disheartening division. Why? Because in a public monument the public does not want, and it should not want, the expression of theories of art personal to any artist—theories more or less esoteric and incomprehensible. What the public wants and should want is the expression, by the help of the artist, of its own sentiments and aspirations. And the greatest artist is he who expresses, not himself, but humanity, not his artistic whims but that which humanity wishes to have expressed for itself—because it cannot express it except through the medium of its gifted artists, whom for that very purpose it willingly supports. But then, it wishes to have its ideals expressed in forms of beauty, such as will surely express and stir its emotions, so that individually and collectively it can contemplate itself in the spiritual mirror held up by the artist, in the creation of which it feels its subconscious share. When a monument does that, then alone is it a masterpiece.

In a public statue a sculptor should be as impersonal as possible in the rendering of the form. Public monuments are public avenues of public expression. There is and should be nothing private about them. For it can be proven that deformation of the form brings on deformation of the mind, then deformation of the soul and then deformation of society. That is why it is a social menace. It is certain that there is an intimate connection between the deformation of the feet of Chinese women and the degradation of China.

The idea that it is easier to express human emotion and to stir mankind by a deformation of the form, above all in a public monument, is silly. In practice it can at most amuse the intellect of a few who lean towards the abnormal and then only for a short while, after which the practice will fill even those with ennui. For art means this—to stir human emotion and not to titillate the brain. And to inflict on the patient public what it, by instinct, regards as an atrocity, based on the deformation of form, just to amuse the intellects of a few artistic mandarins in the individualistic corner of the world of art, is to destroy a golden opportunity that might have been used by some artist, in harmony with a normal majority, for creating a real emotion-stirring and socially binding monument.

If a sculptor wishes to howl to the world: "Look at me, I have an individuality different from any ever seen!" let him do it in his private work and then take the consequences—like the Teutonic ward-heeler: "Shentlemens! I vent to a bolitical meetin de oder nite, und I tchompet on a dable, und I said: Shentlemens, I am here! Vell, by chimmeny, in five seconds I vasn't dere; I vas flyin ouwit by der window!"

Royal Cortissoz says in his admirable book "Art and Common-Sense" (Scribner's): "In fact Rodin's career as a spoilt child of fortune makes a story by itself. An article in *Le Temps* not long ago represented him as saying that on a visit that he had made to Rome he was scrupulously left alone by the members of the French diplomatic circle there and the people of the Villa Medici (the French art school at Rome) in which neglect he saw an official condemnation of his work. These people represented the upper classes of culture of France and were all opposed to Rodin's philosophy and work."

Cortissoz continues: "However this may be, . . . you positively stumble upon his sculpture in the Luxembourg, there are so many of them in that museum." This represents the triumph of the modernistic art party through the help of certain politicians in the Paris parliament, of which party Rodin has been one of the leaders. This abysmal difference of opinion again represents civic division. And lately Parliament voted to accept Rodin's gift of his remaining plaster casts, etc., but against the solid opposition and vote of the Socialist members.

Now history proves that whenever there has occurred such *fierce division* of opinion about works of art as there has been for twenty years about Rodin's work, time will surely condemn it: witness Bandinelli's sculpture after he had descended to the deformation of the form, through stupidity. Can Rodin's deformation—made, let us hope, only through an error—escape the same fate? Hardly!

A daily increasing number of thinkers are now agreeing with Cortissoz when he says:

"Never was an artist kept more devotedly in the public eye. The sentimentalists have risen *en masse* to declare his fame, and it is perhaps no wonder that he is to-day one of the most fashionable makers of portraits in the world and the object of a cult. Neither is it surprising that he has become a little oracular in his sayings and a little complacent in his work.

"What does it all amount to, and how are we really to regard this man of genius, who is also the hero of a preposterous *réclame*? It is indispensable, at the outset, to lay hold of the fact that the genius is there, or at all events was there when Rodin was in his prime. Nor is there anything at all esoteric or baffling about it. His hierophants, of course, would have it that there is something about him grand, gloomy and peculiar and quite beyond the scope of ordinary canons of appreciation. They are the people who in an earlier generation would have stupefied themselves making guesses at the Correggiosity of Correggio. Now they occupy themselves with the Rodinesquerie of Rodin. Of this it is enough to say that 'there ain't no sich thing.' Rodin is not a mystic, thinking profound thoughts and embodying them in puzzling forms. . . .

"What is it that first wakes a doubt? It is that these large contours in Rodin's art spell not so much style as manner. . . .

"Whither does it all tend? The genius who preserves undimmed an authentic inspiration is constructive while he plays, and produces, one after the other, organic fabrics of design. By those works of his you know him for the great creative artist. The lesser man does not fail us in quantity, nor is he necessarily without a certain passing charm, but he remains inchoate and capricious, and by his works you know him, not for the great creative artist, but for the diffusive, unstable 'temperament.' Rodin began by suggesting that he might, perhaps, range himself in the first category, and there are among his earlier works pieces so fine that it is idle to imagine their ever falling into oblivion. But for years he has been unmistakably the man of the smaller gift, consummate in his exploitation of that gift, but none the less a man on the wrong track. . . .

"Rodin's obvious handicap has been the quality of his mind and imagination. His is a profoundly sen-

suous art, sensuous to the core, and while he has been attacking high erected themes, these have not, on his own confession, really mattered to him; it has been enough for him to caress in his marble or bronze a living form. And all the time he has been betrayed by his immense technical resource. It is a byword among sculptors that Rodin, as a modeler, takes their breath away. His is a fatal facility, if ever an artist had that affliction. . . .

"There is a burning life in Rodin's nudities. But it is a life invoked through mechanical skill and through a very earthy passion, if through passion at all. It is perhaps the most conclusive of all testimonies to the truth of this impression that there is no one above the ruck in modern sculpture who is less haunting than Rodin. We observe his work with interest and enjoyment, but it leaves no mark.

"That seems perhaps a risky thing to say of the man who bulks so largely not only in French but in other museums, who has had so many imitators all over the world and has stimulated such a horde of eulogists to unceasing effort. When one has accounted for all the ignorance and sentimentality that have gone to the promotion of the Rodin legend one is still confronted by a body of opinion, among artists as well as among laymen, which is bound to command respect. It is still permissible to believe, however, that Rodin has been vastly overrated, that his great merits lie within clearly defined and, on the whole, rather narrow boundaries, and that when the imitators and the panegyrists have gone down the wind, they will be accompanied by a considerable number of his works."

That having been the effect upon the works of Rodin, of his mistaken philosophy of the deformation of form, what was the effect on his followers and inevitable imitators, as a result of the "stream of tendency" that his theories and his artificial success engendered? Deformation ever more and more pronounced became the order of the day in the Modernistic Bailiwick in the world of art until, finally, we get to the insane, in a "Venus" by Van Dongen [see figure 7, page 298], which was exhibited in the galleries of various dealers in European cities. Need we make any comment upon that degenerate atrocity? And yet it was lauded as a fine thing by a prominent critic in Paris!

Finally we arrive at the bottomless pit of imbecility in sculpture in the "Familial Life" by Archipenko shown in the International Exhibition held here a few years ago. [See figure 8, page 298.] This also was extolled at the time by a few aberrated fanatics of modernity in art and believers in the deformation of the form. When such things as these are seriously acclaimed as great art by would-be sane critics, is it not time to ask "Whither are we drifting?"

To what extent Rodin has created division of feeling and aroused hate in his own France is shown by the following story: In its issue of July 1st, 1910 the *Gil Blas*, one of the oldest journals of Paris, published one of a series of six articles on "The Parasites of Art!" in which it spoke of Rodin as a "trickster of the public," a "manufacturer of odds and ends," etc.

Within a short time something happened in the business vitals of the *Gil Blas*. For in its issue of September 23d, 1910 appeared an article with flaring headlines announcing that there would be held

in the drawing-room of the *Gil Blas* an exhibition of the sketches and drawings of Rodin! This was written by the same man who wrote the other article. It is a masterpiece of pretending to "eat crow" by apologizing while in reality not doing so. Rodin was plastered over with praise. And on October the 17th, 1910 the exhibition was held in the Salon of the *Gil Blas* and was attended by Dujardin-Beaumetz, then the Under-Secretary of State for Fine Arts, evidently for the purpose of making the rebuke to the *Gil Blas* thorough, and as a warning to other newspapers not to attack the Hero of the modernistic art party.

Fancy our Commissioner of Education at Washington lending himself to Saint-Gaudens in order to force the *Washington Era* to "eat crow" by attending an exhibition of his drawings and sketches, held in the parlors of that newspaper—because one of its writers had told what he thought to be the truth!

There are those who look upon Rodin's extreme eroticisms as an apotheosis of love; others regard it as crass licentiousness. Some regard his deformation of the form as grand and significant style; others as a brutalization and a violation of the law established by nature, that, in art, man should honor the Creator by respecting the exquisite forms of the human body which He has realized in man—when the type is perfect. And the abyss between these opposing forces will never be bridged.

Knowing the constitution of the human mind and soul as we do, and judged by the experience of the past, we can now safely predict immortality for the following works of Rodin: Busts of Puvis de Chavanne, Madame Vicuna, the sculptor Dalou, the etcher Legros and a few others; the statue of "The Age of Bronze"; the group "Springtime" and the bas relief "Apollo" on the Sarmiento pedestal at Buenos Ayres. These will live in the affections of mankind because they are either natural or distinguished or charming, beside being extremely skilful in their craftsmanship, which is always alluring and, in these cases, has no offensive deformation of the form about them.

All of the remainder of his works will, it is safe to say, never find a place in the hearts of mankind, either because they are ugly or licentious or brutal or because of their individualistic excessivism of one kind or another. Some of them will appeal to some people as a roast pheasant of an excessively gamey taste might appeal, but would repel normal people. But these works will ever be quarreled about to such an extent, that they will gradually weary the majority of even such people as now applaud them because of their individualistic novelty. Because of this they will by degrees be slowly but surely shoved aside more and more, until they are finally either destroyed or forgotten or ignored in some corner of a museum and used there to point the moral—that a false point of view, relentlessly pursued, will inevitably end in oblivion.

The Rodin Noise will never be understood by the American public until it knows that, when in 1877 his statue "The Age of Bronze" was accused by one idiotic jurymen of having been cast in plaster from life—a thing so utterly impossible, as every sane sculptor knows, as to raise a haw-haw at its very mention—the absurd penny-a-line critics of Paris—obsessed with the silly idea that skilful modeling

alone is high art, and ever on the alert to be the first to note the appearance of a new talent so as to proclaim their own astuteness—lost their heads instantly and became hysterical, all the more since Rodin had once suffered privations as an assistant to others. Sympathy intensified the hysteria. It also blinded them to the fact that skilful modeling is only a part of art. So they slopped over, as is common in Paris, the home of excessivism. And so they put Rodin on a pedestal, no doubt to his own stupefaction, as a new and wonderful revelation, which was to rejuvenate and glorify French sculpture.

The modernistic art party, then crystallizing, quickly made the most of this accusation of the foolish juryman, raised a row against the Jury and the Academy and bawled all the louder for "Liberty in Art!" and for so-called "freedom from academic oppression," which oppression never did exist—except that the academicians obtained all the best commissions which the modernists wanted. So Rodin really became by the very force of events the standard bearer of the modernistic art party.

Later on the boosters of Rodin were hypnotized to make the egregious error of mistaking his "deformation of the form" for a new and a "grand style"; many of them being obsessed by the absurdity that "a work of art lives only by virtue of its style," and they hailed this excessive style as an immensely significant and sublime aberration in the world of art. Rodin, cunning fox that his privations seemed to have made of him, appears to have assumed that pontifical air so becoming to the prophet from the heights of a new æsthetic revelation; he has been accused of having thrown over his acolytes the mystic "kibosh" to intensify their aberration, until they came to regard him as the holy Mohammed of sculpture. How he must laugh now, in his halcyon days of success, and with riches pontifically gathered in, as in his Château at Meudon he reflects over the ease with which uncultured men are stampeded by a false philosophy of any kind, so long as it is promulgated with glittering and cryptic salaams!

The high priests of the Rodin Cult have also talked loudly about the "science of modeling" proclaimed by him. But every sculptor knows there is no such thing. There is absolutely no such mystery about modeling in clay or marble as there is in painting in elusive colors. Every sculptor knows that the surfaces of human forms are made up of small planes dove-tailed into each other by delicate gradations, and that he is the best modeler who has the sharpest eyes and perception to see those planes, and the steadiness of nerves and patience to model them. That is all there is to it.

Moreover Science has no open place in art. If used at all it must be covered up. Because art is not a matter of science, but wholly one of the expression, or the stirring, of human emotion.

The acolytes of Rodin also talk about his using this deep science of modeling for "the intensity of the expression of life." But the public does not care a fig for intensity of expression of life—if the life as expressed is ugly, deformed or vulgar. If the life expressed is not beautiful and ecstacizing but debased and depressing, as many of Rodin's expressions are—away with them to the art morgue! How all this cryptic talk of the boosters of Rodin about the "science of modeling" smacks of the mystic non-

sense by which that festive charlatan Cagliostro hypnotized Paris a hundred years ago.

When Julio Romano who, also like Rodin, had been an assistant to others—to Raphael—received after the latter's death the commission to decorate the palace at Mantua, he painted a lot of grotesque giants, etc. Many at the time hailed these as great advances in art. Even Michelangelo in his old age praised them to Hollanda of Portugal. Neither Michelangelo nor the rest of the artists of that epoch could see that Romano's works were really part of the beginning of the decadence which marks the death of the Renaissance.

If ever the words of Beaumarchais "We must laugh at it in order not to weep!" can be justly used, it is when we contemplate this sheep-like panic and "bell-wetherism," as Carlyle calls the disposition of the unthinking people to break their necks to rush along with the loudest bawlers who proclaim that this or that and so-and-so is "up to date." The craze to appear bored at everything a few years old is a disease injected into our life by Satan; it has become distinctly prevalent since 1850. It is this excessive, diseased hunger to escape *ennui* which generated Baudelaire and modernistic art and caused the apotheosis of the Rodin novelty.

This apotheosis was largely helped along by women. Women should know above all that erotic suggestiveness in art and vulgarity of form, vulgarized social forms and manners are the greatest dangers, not only to civilization but to their own happiness on earth. In self-defense they should be the first to condemn all licentiousness in art. Yet women not only condoned Rodin's eroticisms but maudlingly proclaimed them as either the pardonable slips of "genius" or a manifestation of the transfiguration of sensuality into spirituality. Others gloated over his suggestive creations because of the subjective erotic satisfactions they derived from them.

When one notices the number of women who prostrate themselves before the erotic altar of Rodin one begins to find it difficult to combat successfully the woman despisers and the terrible indictments of the sex by Weininger. One woman art writer wrote us under December 20th, 1916: "If Rodin has developed his art as no other sculptor since Buonarrotti, if among his masterpieces of beauty and lyric poetry in marble there are some ugly subjects or even obscene drawings, it is simply that the great artist has seen all sides of life, knowing that beauty by itself cannot fill out the whole of any expression of human nature. . . .

"As to immorality, perversion, excess on the part of modern artists, taking Rodin as their master, let us acknowledge very clearly that here is a vigorous old man in full vigor and in possession of all his faculties, after a life of such hard work and hardships that most other workmen would have succumbed long ago. Not only this, but in his old age this genius is producing work far more spiritual than any by the Academicians.

"Among the 'Moderns' there are some loose livers or moral perverts. But I beg you to take me among any collection of people who are all perfect."

This woman is morally so myopic that she cannot see that, while the public need not concern itself with the private lives of artists, be they moral perverts or saints, it is the absolute right of the public to flagellate every expression, in art, of licentiousness,

vulgarity, deformity and degeneracy. If an artist wishes privately to make his studio a lupanar, that is his affair. But let him not publicly defile the Temple in the World of Art!

What is the lesson of the Rodin romance for us in America? this: that Rodin is the last man on earth

Americans should imitate, above all in any public monument. For as sure as they do, they will engender civic strife and hate. If any sculptor wishes to imitate him in his private work, that is his affair. He will learn, let us hope before it is too late, the truth of Emerson's remark: "Imitation is suicide."

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

See page 354

ATENTION is called to the article on the Library of Congress in this issue, written by a man who is an authority on the subject.

In publishing this article we wish to emphasize two points. First: that General Casey proved to the country that it is possible in America to build

even the greatest public library in the world without graft and within the appropriation; second: that when the American public obtains a building that is truly beautiful and worthy of the nation, it not only will not protest, but will pay the bill with joy.

SAINT-GAUDENS AND HIS WORK

See frontispiece and page 303

IN its endeavor to recall and place in proper consideration the artists of America who are no more, *THE ART WORLD* this month turns to a sculptor whose loss—and a great loss it was!—is recent, one moreover whose works are familiar from existing monuments, and the influence of whose genius may be traced in the productions of other artists—the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. For the frontispiece this month Mr. Timothy Cole has engraved on wood the lovely alto-relievo of an angel bearing on uplifted hands a tablet inscribed Love-Charity; while as another example of his work there is given in photogravure the sturdy figure of Deacon Chapin called "The Pilgrim." These two figures represent the two poles of the sculptor's work, loveliness in treating supernatural themes and realism in his handling of portraiture.

The Amor-Charitas is for the embellishment of a tomb, but Saint-Gaudens was too similar to the Greeks in temperament to allow that note of sadness to gain the upper hand which is commonly found among the English-speaking communities. Perhaps his French father and Irish mother made it easy for him to avoid that obtrusion of grief, which is the foible of British art. A sweet seriousness is the expression on the face of this angelic caryatid. The monumental style is carried out by the symmetric sweep of the wings that soften the angles of elbows and panel and finish by sending their curling feathers over the straight line of the inscribed tablet. Grace is added by the gentle inclination of the head which takes off the feeling of possible weight in the tablet, while the descending folds of the garment, the hidden cincture that defines the breasts and the loose garland of flowers about the hips form a charming contrast to the rigidity of the upright and horizontal lines of the niche in which the figure stands. By the long descending lines he avoids the necessity of diminishing unduly the size of the head, a method often employed by sculptors and painters to give distinction to figures. The attention is directed at once to the part that

rules, namely the face, and only after that do we follow the curves of the wings and the easy flow of the descending folds. Here we have a noble example of this artist's mastery in high and low relief which appears in many of his portrait panels; but in the present case there is superadded the suggestion of the monumental.

The Pilgrim is a figure larger than life designed to stand before a niche or wall and to be seen from the front. It is at Springfield, Massachusetts, and embodies the "dour" character of that sect among Protestants whose imagination was stirred more profoundly by the Old than the New Testament—among whom Amor and Caritas had some difficulty in holding their own. The very grasp that Deacon Chapin [if indeed the sculptor meant to immortalize that worthy in his work] lays upon his knotted stick seems to justify the fulminations against sinners and threats of hell-fire and chains from the pulpits of Jonathan Edwards and other thoroughgoing and remorseless ministers of old New England—theocrats as well as pastors, tyrants through their love of God. To his side he presses the oak-bound, metal-studded Bible, his constitution and source of wisdom human and divine. The very pose of his feet expresses the rigidity of his views concerning other forms of Protestantism, of the Scarlet Woman, of backsliders and those wallowers in uncleanness and ignorance the Indians. Near these feet lies a branch from the pine tree, representing in its sharp, determined foliage and fruit, in its unchangeableness under summer's heat and winter's cold, the unbending character of his belief.

But it is the face that tells the story first and foremost, with its massive features, stern eyes and closely pressed lips, its dogged thrust of chin and the shadow thrown by the broadbrim over the brow and eyes. "Here I stand; move me if you can!" Nothing kindly or mellow, genial or humane about this face! Perhaps the Frenchman and Irishman in Saint-Gaudens caused him to accentuate in this work the qualities that are most abhorred by them.